

# Critical Agricultural Materials

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## *Fiscal Year 2011 Request for Applications*

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: September 2, 2011**



**U.S. Department of Agriculture**

**National Institute of Food and Agriculture**

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE;  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**CRITICAL AGRICULTURAL MATERIALS**

**INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT - FY 2011**

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE:** This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under **10.200**.

**DATES:** Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on **September 2, 2011** (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline normally will not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

**STAKEHOLDER INPUT:** The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is requesting comments regarding this Request for Applications (RFA) from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and will be used to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, education and extension for use in formulating future RFAs for competitive programs. Written stakeholder comments on this RFA should be submitted in accordance with the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy and Oversight Branch; Office of Extramural Programs; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: [RFP-OEP@NIFA.usda.gov](mailto:RFP-OEP@NIFA.usda.gov). (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the **Critical Agricultural Materials Program RFA**.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** NIFA announces the availability of grant funds and requests applications for the Critical Agricultural Materials Program for fiscal year (FY) 2011 to develop and demonstrate industrial paints, coatings, adhesives for composites, and innovative aerial delivery systems or components that are manufactured from domestically produced crop or woody materials. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2011 is approximately \$1,000,000.

This notice identifies the objectives for Critical Agricultural Materials projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a Critical Agricultural Materials grant. NIFA additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program.

## Table of Contents

<b>PART I – FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
A. Legislative Authority and Background .....	4
B. Purpose and Priorities.....	4
C. Program Area Description.....	4
<b>PART II – AWARD INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
A. Available Funding.....	5
B. Type of Applications .....	5
C. Project Types .....	5
<b>PART III – ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>7</b>
A. Eligible Applicants.....	7
B. Cost Sharing or Matching .....	7
<b>PART IV – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>8</b>
A. Electronic Application Package .....	8
B. Content and Form of Application Submission .....	9
C. Submission Date and Time .....	12
D. Funding Restrictions .....	12
E. Other Submission Requirements .....	12
<b>PART V – APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS .....</b>	<b>14</b>
A. General .....	14
B. Evaluation Criteria .....	14
C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality .....	15
D. Organizational Management Information .....	15
<b>PART VI – AWARD ADMINISTRATION .....</b>	<b>16</b>
A. General .....	16
B. Award Notice .....	16
C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements .....	17
D. Expected Output and Reporting Requirements.....	18
<b>PART VII – AGENCY CONTACT .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PART VIII – OTHER INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>20</b>
A. Access to Review Information .....	20
B. Use of Funds; Changes.....	20
C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards .....	21
D. Regulatory Information.....	21
E. Definitions .....	21

## **PART I – FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Legislative Authority and Background**

The authority for this program is under Section 5(d) of the Critical Agricultural Materials Act (7 U.S.C. 178, as amended (Pub. L. 95-592) to develop and demonstrate industrial polymers that are manufactured from domestically produced agricultural materials and are of strategic and industrial importance to benefit the economy, defense and general well-being of the Nation. Many such products replace petroleum-based products, and offer opportunities to create new businesses and new markets for agricultural materials.

### **B. Purpose and Priorities**

The focus of the FY 2011 program is on product development, demonstration and validation of product performance under operational field conditions, specifically for paints, coatings, adhesives for composites, and aerial delivery systems or components.

Advances in polymer science have resulted in products with superior functional performance that also address environmental and human health concerns. Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are considered to be a major human health issue and polymer products that can meet performance requirements with minimal or no use of VOCs are of interest to NIFA. Examples of products of interest include: low VOC architectural paints, paper coatings, ultraviolet cured coatings, and wood-based composites. Rapid biodegradability of a product at the end of its functional use addresses environmental issues associated with solid waste. Biodegradable products of interest include aerial delivery systems or components of such systems.

### **C. Program Area Description**

In FY 2011, the Critical Agricultural Materials Program will support the development and field demonstration of novel technologies for use in paints, coatings, adhesives for composites, and aerial delivery systems that are both agriculture-based and environmentally preferable. The objective of this program is to help product developers demonstrate functional performance and life-cycle environmental and economic performance against competitive petroleum-based products and applicable industry, military, and eco-labeling standards.

The intended outcome of the Critical Agricultural Materials Program is to help commercialize agriculture-based products that can provide federal agencies, state entities, industry, the military, and consumers with safer, more cost effective, and environmentally preferable purchasing options.

Examples of funded projects can be found at: <http://cris.NIFA.usda.gov/cgi-bin/starfinder/0?path=fastlink1.txt&id=anon&pass=&search=gc=mm.2%20AND%20gy%3E2002&format=WEBTITLESG>

## **PART II – AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Available Funding**

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. NIFA anticipates funding one or two projects which will contribute to the development and field demonstration of products. The total amount of funds available is approximately \$1,000,000. The project period shall not exceed 3 years.

Awards issued as a result of this RFA will have designated the Automated Standard Applications for Payment System (ASAP), operated by the Department of Treasury's Financial Management Service, as the payment system for funds. For more information see [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/method\\_of\\_payment.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/method_of_payment.html).

### **B. Type of Applications**

In FY 2011, applications may be submitted to the Critical Agricultural Materials Program as one of the following types of requests:

**(1) New application.** This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the Critical Agricultural Materials Program. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

**(2) Renewal application.** This is a project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in an original or amended award. Applications for renewed funding must contain the same information as required for new applications, and additionally must contain a Progress Report (attach to R&R Other Project Information Form according to Part IV, B, 3 (c)). Renewal applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in the appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

In FY 2011, Critical Agricultural Materials will award standard grants, which are instruments by which NIFA agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined project period without any statement of intention to provide additional support at a future date.

### **C. Project Types**

NIFA anticipates funding one or two projects which will contribute to the development and field demonstration of products. Successful applicants will be awarded grants. The total amount of funds available is approximately \$1,000,000. The project period shall not exceed 3 years. Including potential no-cost extension(s), the project period must not exceed the statutory maximum of 60 months. (See Award Terms and Conditions for further details.)

Projects that focus on field testing and evaluation will be given priority. This program has

traditionally supported development of low VOC paints, coatings and adhesives, and this year the program has been expanded to include biodegradable aerial delivery systems and their components.

## **PART III – ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

Applications may be submitted by any person, or public or private agency or organization. Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. An applicant's failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of an application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.

### **B. Cost Sharing or Matching**

NIFA does not require matching or cost sharing support for this program, and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

## PART IV – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### A. Electronic Application Package

Only electronic applications may be submitted to NIFA via Grants.gov in response to this RFA. **Applicants are advised to submit early to the Grants.gov system.** A minimum of 48 hours in advance of the closing date and time is recommended.

#### New Users of Grants.gov

Prior to preparing an application, it is suggested that the PD/PI first contact an Authorized Representative (AR)(also referred to as Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grant.gov. If the organization is not prepared (e.g., the institution/organization is new to the electronic grant application process through Grants.gov), then the one-time registration process must be completed PRIOR to submitting an application. It can take as much as two weeks to complete the registration process so it is critical to begin as soon as possible. In such situations the AR should go to **“Get Registered” on the Grants.gov left navigation bar ( or go to [http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get\\_registered.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp)) for information on registering the institution/organization with Grants.gov. A quick reference guide listing the steps is available as a 4-page PDF document at the following website:** <http://www.grants.gov/section910/Grants.govRegistrationBrochure.pdf>.

#### Steps to Obtain Application Package Materials

The steps to access application materials are as follows:

1. In order to access, complete and submit applications, applicants must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov. This software is essential to apply for NIFA Federal assistance awards. For basic system requirements and download instructions, please see [http://www.grants.gov/help/download\\_software.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp). To verify that you have a compatible version of Adobe Reader, Grants.gov established a test package that will assist you in making that determination. Grants.gov Adobe Versioning Test Package: <http://www.grants.gov/applicants/AdobeVersioningTestOnly.jsp>.
2. The application package must be obtained via Grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov>, click on “Apply for Grants” in the left-hand column, click on **“Step 1: [Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions](#),”** enter the funding opportunity number **“USDA-NIFA-OP-003504”** in the appropriate box and click “Download Package.” From the search results, click “Download” to access the application package.

Contained within the application package is the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov.” This Guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to



complete the application forms.

**If assistance is needed to access the application package** (e.g., downloading or navigating Adobe forms), **or submitting the application** then refer to resources available on the Grants.gov Web site first (<http://grants.gov/>). Grants.gov assistance is also available as follows:

Grants.gov customer support

Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Closed on [Federal holidays](#)

Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

See <http://www.NIFA.usda.gov/funding/electronic.html> for additional resources for applying electronically.

## **B. Content and Form of Application Submission**

Electronic applications should be prepared following Parts V and VI of the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov.” This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed in order to prepare an application in response to this RFA. **If there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.**

Note the attachment requirements (e.g., portable document format) in Part III section 3. of the Guide. **ANY PROPOSALS CONTAINING NON-PDF DOCUMENTS WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW.** Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review. With documented prior approval, resubmitted applications will be accepted until close of business on the closing date in the RFA.

**If you do not own PDF-generating software, Grants.gov provides online tools to assist applicants. Users will find a link to “Convert Documents to PDF” on <http://grants.gov/assets/PDFConversion.pdf>.**

**For any questions related to the preparation of an application** please review the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide and the applicable request for applications. If assistance is still needed for preparing application forms content, contact:

- Email: [electronic@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:electronic@nifa.usda.gov)
- Phone: 202-401-5048
- Business hours: Monday through Friday, 7:00 am – 5:00 pm Eastern Time, excluding Federal holidays.

### **1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 2. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

## **2. SF 424 (R&R) Project/Performance Site Location(s)**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 3. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

## **3. R&R Other Project Information Form**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 4. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract– The summary should include the relevance of the project to the goals of the Critical Agricultural Materials Program (see Part I, C.).

b. Field 8. Project Narrative

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 12 pages of written text regardless of whether it is single or double spaced and up to 3 additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum (15 pages) has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

### **Applicants should provide the following program-specific information in their applications:**

i) Introduction. A clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives or research questions of the proposed project should be included. Summarize the body of knowledge or other past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project. Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project including the work of key project personnel. Preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed research should be included in this section.

ii) Rationale and Significance. Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed development and demonstration. Document the priority setting process and stakeholder involvement. Describe how the application's goals and priorities relate to potential long-range improvement in and sustainability of U.S. agriculture. Novel ideas or contributions that the proposed project offers should also be discussed in this section.

iii) Approach. The activities proposed or problems being addressed must be clearly stated and the approaches being applied clearly described. Specifically, this section must include:

- A description of the activities proposed and the sequence in which the activities are to be performed;
- Methods to be used in carrying out the proposed project, including the feasibility of the methods;
- Description of how life cycle analysis will be incorporated into the project;
- Specific barriers, expected outcomes;
- Means by which results will be analyzed, assessed, or interpreted;
- Uses for product, target markets;
- History of research that focuses on performance and the elimination of volatile organic

- compounds or biodegradability of the product, as appropriate;
- History of scale-up capabilities and/or commercial trials to test and validate products;
- History of collaboration with industry, academia, and government agencies; and
- Field demonstration of functional and environmental performance according to relevant standards that may include, but not limited to ASTM, ANSI, military specifications, eco-labeling, or other environmental standards;
  - Such activities may include establishing or modifying existing standards and specifications

c. Other Attachments (Field 11. on the Form) – **PDF Attachment.**

**Progress Report.** This requirement applies to "Renewal applications" (see Part II, B.(2) "Types of Applications.") Applicants submitting renewal applications should submit for this section a brief progress report. Applications for renewed funding must contain the same information as required for new applicants and will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in appropriate areas to which they are assigned. There is no page limit for the progress report.

#### **4. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 5. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

**5. R&R Personal Data** – As noted in Part V, 6. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide, the submission of this information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award.

#### **6. R&R Budget**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 7. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

**7. SF 424 (R&R) Subaward Budget Attachment (Only required if the application includes subawards)** Include subaward budgets for each 12-month period, plus a cumulative budget for the entire project in the R&R Subaward Budget Attachment and use the Budget Justification to explain each budget item. All subaward proposals require the signature of that organization's AR. If applicable, signed letters of commitment from any proposed subaward ARs must be included. **Applicants will note that the R&R Subaward Budget Attachment(s) Form allows no more than 10 R&R Subaward Budget Files for a grant application. Applicants are instructed to include any remaining subaward budget(s) under Field K. "Budget Justification", incorporating them as part of the required PDF attachment.**

#### **8. Supplemental Information Form**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part VI, 1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. Field 2. Program Code. Enter the program code name "Critical Ag Materials" and the program code is "MM.2".

### C. Submission Date and Time

**Instructions for submitting an application are included in Part IV, Section 1.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.**

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by COB on **September 2, 2011** (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

**Applicants who have problems with the submission of an application to Grants.gov are encouraged to FIRST contact the Grants.gov Help Desk to resolve any problems. Keep a record of any such correspondence. See Part IV. A. for Grants.gov contact information.**

Correspondence regarding submitted applications will be sent using e-mail. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received correspondence **from NIFA** regarding a submitted application within 15 days of the established deadline, please contact the Program Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel or a delay in the issuance of an award. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.**

### D. Funding Restrictions

NIFA has determined that grant funds awarded under this authority may not be used for the renovation or refurbishment of research, education, or extension space; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such space; or the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.

Section 7132 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 amended the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3310(a)), limiting indirect costs for grants to 22 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. Therefore, when preparing budgets, applicants should limit their requests for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of their institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 22 percent of total Federal funds awarded.

Pursuant to section 1472(c) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 USC 3318(c)), the agency may not grant any extension of time beyond five years, regardless of circumstances.

### E. Other Submission Requirements

The applicant should follow the submission requirements noted in the document entitled "A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov." Described below are the requirements for successful submission of an application, all of the

following steps must be met for an application to be considered for peer review:

- 1) Meeting the deadline: To electronically send the application to Grants.gov the submit button is hit, which triggers a date and time stamp on the application. The date and time stamp is used to determine whether the application was received by Grants.gov before the deadline, which is prior to close of business (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time) on **September 2, 2011**. An application submitted or resubmitted after the deadline is late. Consideration of late applications is only given in extenuating circumstances (e.g., natural disasters, confirmed Grants.gov outage) with proper documentation and support of the Agency Contact (see Part VII). The occurrence of one of these situations does not automatically ensure that a late application will be accepted. If an applicant wants a late application considered under an extenuating circumstance, the applicant should contact the Agency Contact accordingly.
- 2) Successful Grants.gov validation: The Grants.gov system performs a limited check of the application, and applicants are notified by Grants.gov of the outcome of the initial review. Applications meeting Grants.gov requirements are made available to the funding agency for further processing. Applications that fail Grants.gov validation may be resubmitted to Grants.gov if the original agency deadline has not passed. (Note that the Grants.gov system may allow applications to be submitted after the deadline has passed, but the application is considered late by NIFA.)
- 3) Successful Agency validation: NIFA staff performs precursory review of the application. The agency validation process includes, for example, meeting eligibility requirements and following agency application guidelines (e.g., formatting, page limitations, limits on budget requests). Applicants are notified by NIFA of the outcome of this review.

## **PART V – APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. General**

Each application will be evaluated in a two-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a review panel.

Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

### **B. Evaluation Criteria**

The evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA. Applicants should address each criterion.

#### **Specific criteria to be used to select awardees: Value 50%**

- Demonstrated knowledge base in the application of agricultural materials in polymer science and engineering;
- Demonstrated knowledge of research, development and marketing of paints, coatings, adhesives, or aerial delivery system components derived from crop and forestry materials;
- Demonstrated history of research that focuses on performance and the environmental attributes of the product of interest;
- Demonstrated expertise in life cycle assessment and other environmental impact, cost, and economic evaluation methods;
- Demonstrated history of collaboration with industry, academia, government agencies or end user; and
- Demonstration of product feasibility through field testing and validation to industry or military standards.

#### **General criteria to be used to select awardees: Value 50%**

##### **1. Scientific Merit of the Application for Research: Value 25%**

- Novelty, innovation, uniqueness, and originality;
- Clarity and delineation of objectives;

- Adequacy of the description of the undertaking and suitability and feasibility of methodology;
- Probability of commercialization; and
- Ability to transfer knowledge gained from these systems to organizations of importance to U.S. agriculture.

## **2. Qualifications of Project Personnel, Adequacy of Facilities, and Project Management Capability: Value 25%**

- Qualifications of applicant (individual or team) to conduct the proposed project, including performance record and potential for future accomplishments.

### **C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality**

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined by reference to the current Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, Virginia 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2300. Web site: <http://www.hepinc.com>.

Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.

### **D. Organizational Management Information**

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one-time basis, with updates on an as needed basis, as part of the responsibility determination prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another NIFA program. NIFA will provide copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors which may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal financial and non-financial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

## **PART VI – AWARD ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. General**

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official of NIFA shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the awarding official of NIFA as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that the project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by NIFA under this RFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (part 2 CFR 215 and 3019 of 7 CFR).

### **B. Award Notice**

The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the following:

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to which the Director has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;
- (2) Title of project;
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PDs chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- (4) Identifying award number assigned by the Department;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Director during the project period;
- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see <http://www.NIFA.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view NIFA award terms and conditions);



(10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and

(11) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by NIFA to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

### **C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to:

7 CFR Part 1, subpart A—USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

7 CFR Part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.

7 CFR Part 15, subpart A—USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

7 CFR Part 331 and 9 CFR Part 121—USDA implementation of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002.

7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21 and A-122 (2 CFR Parts 220 and 230), and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224)), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

7 CFR Part 3017—USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement).

7 CFR Part 3018—USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations (2 CFR Part 215).

7 CFR Part 3021—Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance).

7 CFR Part 3052—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Nonprofit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3407—CSREES procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

7 CFR 3430—Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Grant Programs--General Grant Administrative Provisions.

29 U.S.C. 794 (section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR Part 15b (USDA implementation of statute) —prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in Federally assisted programs.

35 U.S.C. 200 et seq. —Bayh Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in Federally assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR Part 401).

#### **D. Expected Output and Reporting Requirements**

Grantees are to submit initial project information and annual and summary reports to NIFA's electronic, Web-based inventory system that facilitates both grantee submissions of project outcomes and public access to information on Federally-funded projects. The details of these reporting requirements are included in the award terms and conditions.

**The NIFA Agency-specific Terms and Conditions include the requirement that a Financial Status Report (Form SF-425) is due on an annual basis no later than 90 days following the end of the award anniversary date. A final —Federal Financial Report, Form SF-425, is due 90 days after the expiration date of this award.**

## **PART VII – AGENCY CONTACT**

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Carmela Bailey, National Program Leader – Division of Bioenergy; National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Stop 2210; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250 – 2210; telephone: (202) 401-6443; fax: (202) 401-5172; e-mail: [cbailey@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:cbailey@nifa.usda.gov).

## **PART VIII – OTHER INFORMATION**

### **A. Access to Review Information**

Copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments will be sent to the applicant PD after the review process has been completed.

### **B. Use of Funds; Changes**

#### **1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility**

Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, the awardee may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

#### **2. Changes in Project Plans**

a. The permissible changes by the awardee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the awardee or the PD(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the award document, not the program contact.

b. Changes in approved goals or objectives shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.

c. Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes.

d. Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not Federal funds are involved, shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

e. The project period may be extended by NIFA without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed five years. Any extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the awardee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of award.

f. Changes in Approved Budget: Unless stated otherwise in the terms and conditions of award, changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to instituting such changes if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of

amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

### **C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards**

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of NIFA transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by the Agency for a period of three years. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

### **D. Regulatory Information**

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

### **E. Definitions**

Please refer to 7 CFR 3430, Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Grant Programs--General Grant Administrative Provisions, for the applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program.